

No. 8. *The Sufferings & Death of Christ.*
For Good-Friday or the Sacrament.

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Hebrews 12th—2d Verse.

Looking unto Jesus, the Author & Finisher of our Faith, who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame.

*Whoever considers the great Expence at which Salvation was purchased—the invaluable Sacrifice that was offered to appease an incensed Deity—from a Sense of the Misery he may escape, and the Expectation of Happiness, to which he is hereby intitled, cannot but cry out with the devout Rapture of the Psalmist, “ Lord! what is Man that Thou art thus
“ mindful of him, and the Son of Man that Thou
“ so regardest him?”*

When our first Parents had eaten of the fruit of the forbidden Tree—and renounced the protection of infinite Goodness—when, by their disingenuous Revolt from the lenient Command of their Creator, they had brought Sin into the world, and communi-

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cated its Effects to all their Posterity, Death:—when the whole World was in wickedness, and alienated from God by wicked works—then it was, when there appeared no way to escape, that the Justice of Heaven required Satisfaction, and a Sacrifice was demanded to free us from eternal Death:—Christ voluntarily became that Sacrifice for all the fallen rebellious Race of Adam, and, by offering up himself immaculate—“without Spot or Blemish”—reconciled a World of Sinners to his offended Father.

He died for us that we, by his Death, might have Peace and Reconciliation with God, that, by embracing his Gospel, and answering the end of its Promulgation, we might enjoy the Felicity of Heaven, and sit with himself for ever at the right-hand of God.—Amidst the temptations then of this World, the engagements of Business—the allurements of Pleasure—the excess of Dissipation, what abundant Reason, what persuasive Motives have we to “run with

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"Patience, the Race that is set before us, looking
"unto Jesus, &c."

In order to convince us of the necessity—and
excite us to the practice, of treading in our Master's
Steps—let every Christian, every one who wishes his
Saviour not to have died for him in vain—[every one
who is this Day to commemorate his Death in the
holy Sacrament] apply to himself this awful consolation
—'It was for me He lived, suffered, died:—To
'expiate my Sins He left the Bosom of his Father:
'To reconcile me to God, He was betrayed, condemn-
'ed, crucified.'—

Reflections like these will animate us with vi-
gor to embrace the glorious Truths—with resolution to
maintain the saving Doctrines—with steadiness to
practise the salutary Precepts of the Evangelical Dis-
pensation.

Of a Christian something more is naturally &
justly required than mere morality.—We are to raise

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our Minds to the source of all good—we are to consider ourselves the Brethren of the Redeemer of the world—the Sons and Daughters, by Adoption, of Him by whom the Heavens and the Earth were made.—If we rest in a mere Cultivation of the moral Temper, we are like blossoms without fruit, and, by promising so fairly, we shall but aggravate the Disappointment.

“We are to walk,” in all respects, “worthy the
“Vocation wherewith we are called.”—“The Times
“of” Jewish Ignorance, and Gentile Idolatry, “God,”
in compassion, “winked at—but now”—in this
Land of Light, illuminated by the glorious Display
of the Gospel—“He hath commanded”—and now be
unto those who disobey his Commands!—“all men
“every where to repent.”—The Gospel is given us “as
“a Light to our feet—& a Lanthorn to our Paths,”
to instruct us in the Knowledge of our Duty, and in-
cite us to the practice of it.—“If I had not come and

"spoken to them, they had not had Sin, but now they have
 "no cloke for their Sin."—The Religion into which
 we are baptiz'd is eminently distinguished by the Purity
 of its Doctrines—by the Justness of its Precepts—the
 Greatness of its Promises—the Awfulness of its
 Threats—the Certainty of its Rewards—the Severity
 of its Punishments.

Amiable and excellent Religion! which makes
 our greatest Interest our Duty—which raises, im=
 proves, ennobles our Nature, qualifies us for the
 Happiness of another Life, and disposes our Souls
 for the true Enjoyment of it!

"What manner of Persons, in all holy Con=
 "versation and Godliness," this Religion requires "us
 "to be"—how serene in our Tempers, how exemplary
 in our Conduct—how devout in our Affections, as
 it ought to be the object of our most serious Enquiry—so,
 to be really such, will assuredly be an inexpressible sup=
 port and consolation in our most trying circumstances.

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To those who live under its influence—who are actuated by the spirit, and enlivened by the comfort of Religion—[to those who this day demonstrate their obedience to the Commands, and assert their claim to the Blessings of Christianity, by partaking of its most distinguishing ordinance] to you I appeal—whether the yoke of Religion is not to be preferred to the freedom of unrestrained Licentiousness:—whether there is not more solid satisfaction in meditating on the stupendous means by which your Salvation was accomplished, than in the indulgence of your desires, in the possession of wealth, or the distinctions of vanity.—

To view the last scenes of the life of the Son of God, [the proper subject of this day's meditation] let us approach, not with the confidence of children, but with the humility of servants—though He is "the Lord of all Lords," whilst, in the character of a Son, in the assumption of the human nature, we adore his Godhead, we shall be instructed by his example.—

When the life, which was commenced in indigence, and continued in obscurity, was to be closed with "the shedding of innocent Blood," that we might know for our comfort He "was such a High-Priest as" "indeed became us," was suitable to the state of such sinners, "was touched with the feelings of our infirmities, his soul became exceeding sorrowful even" "unto death." He prayed, therefore, with the most profound humility, that He might, by the exertions of Omnipotence, escape the piercing misery which visibly awaited him; "Abba Father, all things are possible unto Thee, remove this Cup from me—nevertheless, not my will—but thine be done."—Lord of Mercies! didst Thou subject thyself to this for rebellious, for apostate Man! Tho' thy life had been never sullied by Transgression—tho' thy conscience never felt the agonizing Pangs of guilt—did thy soul, innocent as it was—shudder at the thoughts of what an iniquitous Tribunal was about to inflict on Thee!

To avert, or at least to suspend, the vehemence of malice, the fury of zeal, the impetuosity of revenge, the Holy Jesus, the great exemplar of all goodness, appeals to the innocency of his life and the tenor of his behaviour—and then, without an effort of resistance, or exertion of defence, resigns himself with this mild acquiescence, “This is your hour and the power of Darkness.”—How literally was fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah? “Surely He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken” for his own offences, “smitten of God, and afflicted” for his own sins.—“But He was wounded for our Transgressions; He was bruised for our Iniquities—the chastisement of our Peace was upon Him, and by His Stripes we are healed.—“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth;—He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth.”—

His behavior before Pilate, amidst the insults of a desperate and enraged populace, indicated the same meekness and humility.—When He was brought into the Judgment-Hall—"the Chief Priests and Scribes" vehemently accused Him."—Not content with that, they suborned "false witnesses—but," as is usually the case, where perjury is to be the basis of success, "their testimony agreed not together."—So great was the confusion that nothing could be heard, but "Away with Him—crucify Him—crucify Him". Infatuated men! to prefer a malefactor to the God of Heaven!—

After having recourse to every expedient which malice could devise or ingenuity supply—like the Herodians on another occasion, they attempted, by an insidious question, to entangle "Him in his talk. Art thou the Christ?" His only reply was—"Thou sayest that I am"—And was that, Pilate, was that Ground sufficient, on which thou mightest crucify

an innocent person!—if thou must oblige the Chief-
 Priests, would it not be enough “to scourge Him
 “and let Him go?”—Happy would it have been
 for thee, had thy conscience, which acknowledged Him
 Righteous, enforced by thy wife’s admonition—“Have
 “thou nothing to do with that just man”—suggested
 to thee boldly to oppose their clamors, and, to “judge
 “righteous judgment! But, instead of yielding to
 “her suggestions, he did not even restrain the insults
 of licentious Fury; “they spit on Him—covered
 “His face—buffetted Him and cried, Prophecy un-
 “to us who it is that smote Thee;”—intending either
 “to excite in Him a spirit of impotent resentment—
 or—on the other hand, hoping, if He were indeed
 the Christ, He would miraculously deliver himself
 out of their hands. Between two malefactors, men,
 notorious for their atrocious deeds, they inhumanly
 crucified Him—a Death, of all others, the most
 painful and ignominious.—There “behold and see—

"if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow where-
 "with the Lord afflicted Him!" Behold our High-
 Priest offering up the great Sacrifice for the Redemp-
 tion of souls! pouring out His own Blood on the Altar
 of His cross! and thereby making an atonement for
 the sins of the whole world! Behold thy Saviour in
 all the torments that malice can inflict—in all the
 agonies that nature can endure! Behold Him pale
 and languid—bleeding on the cross—His head en-
 circled with thorns—His hands pierced with nails—
 His feet all torn and mangled! When He had
 hung three hours—the sport of wantonness—the scoff
 of brutality—the victim of rage—unable any longer
 to bear such exquisite pain—He cried, "It is finish-
 "ed, and He bowed his head, and gave up the Ghost."
 In confirmation of what He had declared, that "He
 "was the Son of God," there was Darkness, though
 it was open day, from the sixth to the ninth hour.—
 The Sun was ashamed, the moon refused her light.—

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"The vail of the Temple was rent in twain from
"the top to the bottom, the Earth did quake, the Rocks
"rent, the Graves were opened, and many Bodies
"of Saints which slept, arose, and appeared unto
"many."—At such unheard-of prodigies—what
Amazement—what Consternation must have fallen
upon those who cried out, "Crucify Him, Crucify
"him?" What "Fear and Trembling" must have
seized their hearts, when the Confession was extorted
from them—"Truly this was the Son of God?"—

What use shall we make of this instructive Lesson?
"What Reward shall we give unto the Lord" for
this inestimable Blessing? 'Assured, Lord, of thy
'Goodness, and awed by thy Majesty, we dedicate our
'lives to Thee! We are henceforward what thy holy
'Religion requires, and our own Hearts approve.
'[We come prepared to celebrate thy Passion & Death
'in the way Thou hast appointed.] The Impressions
'of Thy Goodness, the Overflowings of Thy Mercy,

the Desire of Salvation—will never, we trust, be
 eradicated from our minds.—We are willing to be,
 to do, to suffer, whatever, in Thy Wisdom, Thou
 shalt ordain.—What will promote Thy Glory, the
 Good of Men, the Salvation of our Souls, That, we
 embrace with cheerfulness, and pursue with ardor.—
 [We approach Thy Table, Lord, with the deepest hu-
 mility, penetrated with a sense of our unworthiness, &
 worthy only through the merits of Thy Blessed Son.
 May the bread which came down from heaven—"the
 body of our Lord Jesus Christ," nourish our souls unto
 eternal Life, and may the Cup of the New=Cove-
 nant—the Blood of Jesus—refresh us with its vivi-
 fying Powers!] May our conduct testify the con-
 version of our hearts, and exhibit the practice of those
 virtues of which the life of our Redeemer was com-
 posed here on earth, and which are the best of all obla-
 tions that are offered Him now He is enthroned
 above all height! As Thou hast cleansed us, Blessed

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' Jesus, of the guilt derived from our first Parents,
' do Thou graciously be pleased to present us spotless,
' cloathed in thy Righteousness only, to God the Lord
' and Maker of all.—May our names, through
' Thy irresistible intercession with the Father, " be
" written in the Book of Life," " that " when we have
" run the Race set before us, and finished our course,"
" we may be blessed, for ever blessed, with the Light of
' Thy Countenance !

Theoph^o. J. St. John.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

